

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 01347 071611Z

64

ACTION NEA-12

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H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1750

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1347

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI SPECULATIONS ON SURPRISE CONCLUSION

ON GOVERNMENT CRISIS

1. ISRAELIS ARE BEGINNING WIDELY TO SPECULATE PRIVATELY THAT SECURITY SITUATION ON SYRIAN BORDER WAS NOT ACTUALLY OF SUCH PROPORTIONS AS TO LEAD TO VIRTUALLY INSTANTANEOUS RESOLUTION OF PROTRACTED GOVT CRISIS, AND ESPECIALLY REVERSAL OF DAYAN'S DECISION NOT TO SERVE AS DEFENSE MINISTER IN NEW GOVT.

2. FOR EXAMPLE AT DINNER LAST NIGHT ACTING HEAD OF JEWISH AGENCY ARYE DULZIN TOLD ME QUITE BLUNTLY THAT HE AND MANY OF HIS LIKUD COLLEAGUES BELIEVED THAT CRISIS WAS CONTRIVED TO FIND CONVENIENT WAY OUT OF IMPASSE. HAARETZ EDITOR AND OTHERS AT DINNER, INCLUDING SOME AMBASSADORS, ECHOED SAME SENTIMENTS.

3. WE SHOULD SEE INCREASED ATTENTION IN PRESS IN NEXT FEW DAYS AS TO WHETHER SECURITY SITUATION WAS NOT JUST PRETEXT FOR DAYAN GRACEFULL TO RETREAT FROM THE PRESIPICE. PRESS HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO RAISE POSSIBILITY OF "FOREIGN" OR EVEN SPECIFICALLY US INVOLVEMENT IN PRECIPITATING RESOLUTION OF GOVERNMENT CRISIS. JERSUSALEM POST MARCH 7 WRITES THAT THERE IS "STRONG UNDERCURRENT OF TENSION AFTER FOREIGN REPORTS THE SYRIANS ARE PLANNING TO

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 01347 071611Z

MOUNT AN OFFENSIVE" WHILE HAARATZ (MARGALIT AND GOLAN)

MARCH 7 RAISE THE "POSSIBILITY THAT ANOTHER COUNTRY 'PLANTED' IN ISRAEL REPORTS ON SYRIAN ALERT IN ORDER TO EXPEDITE FORMATION OF GOI" ADDING THAT PROLONGATION OF THE CRISIS WAS NOT TO THE LIKING OF ISRAEL'S FRIENDS, FOREMOST OF ALL THE US.

4. SOME JOURNALISTS MAY TRY TO DRAW COMPARISION BETWEEN ALERT OF US FORCES LAST OCTOBER AND CURRENT ISRAEL STATE OF READINESS, ATTRIBUTING DOMESTIC POLITICAL MOVES TO BOTH. MANY HARDLINERS HAVE NEVER ACCEPTED THAT OUR ALERT REALLY NECESSARY.)

5. BASED ON INFO AVAILABLE TO US WHICH I REALIZE MAY BE INCOMPLETE, WE ARE UNABLE TO STATE WITH CONFIDENCE WHETHER OR NOT THE POLITICAL EVENTS OF THE PAST TWO DAYS WERE MOTIVATED PRIMARILY BY GOI PERCEPTIONS OF POTENTIALLY SERIOUS TROUBLE IN GOLAN. I STRONGLY SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS MORE THAN A GRAIN OF TRUTH IN THE THEORY WHICH HOLDS THAT THE SYRIAN "MENANCE" WAS AT LEAST A BIT OVERPLAYED FOR DOMESTIC REASONS.
KEATING

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